



Student Union President Michelle MacCallum and Bruce Davison (displaying the pleasant demeanour required of a VPE) at the rally.

## Students protest funding freeze

by Stacy Dunn

The provincial government got an early Valentine's Day card from the Student Union on Thursday, February 11th in front of the Shaw building downtown. This card, which was presented by Student Union President Michelle MacCallum to education minister Paul Connolly, said "Cuts are Breaking Our Hearts" and was signed by students who are concerned with the Liberal government's freeze on funding to the university and the inaccessibility of provincial bursaries.

Approximately thirty people joined MacCallum on a cold Thursday afternoon to voice their views on the government's treatment of university students. Vice President External of the Student Union, Bruce Davison,

stated that post secondary education has to resort to lobbying. He adds that we don't want this pressure on the government, but it is the government's choice that this (rally) is happening. "As this budget deficit is worsening", Davison remarks "(it is creating) the development of the human deficit."

During the rally, Paul Connolly met with the crowd outside to receive his card and show his support for the students. He said that he realizes the importance of education and he was going to meet with cabinet to discuss the funding freeze. Connolly blamed the funding situation on the reduction of the federal government's equalization payments and stressed that he stands by the bursary program.

While Connolly was outside, some of the

rally-goers asked him about the funding inadequacies. To these people, his acknowledgments fell short of satisfactory. Connolly just kept saying he stands by the students and will address their concerns to cabinet.

Interestingly, a father of two daughters and New Democratic Party leader Larry Duchesne attended this rally. The father, who is a carpenter, told Connolly that he is frightened that he won't be able to afford to send his two daughters to university and added he worries about the growing unemployment situation. On the other hand, Duchesne noted the government's poor handling of education and stressed the NDP's mandate to provide adequate funding and to make education free to those who can't afford the expense.

The small group of lobbyists proved by their strong chants ("UPEI not UI") and questions to the Education Minister that they will not stand for the current funding freeze and bursary unavailability. At the end of the rally, MacCallum and Davison left around two-hundred cards at premier Callbeck's office. These cards urged her to show her understanding of the funding problem by responding to the students who signed the individual cards. Even if Callbeck doesn't address each person, at least the Student Union knows this rally was a productive one.

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have this must we make it two and a half pages long?

Another problem is that there is rarely (although Feb. 11th issue did have a few) any U.P.E.I. news. We have sports teams here from basketball to volleyball to hockey yet, I never see any news on the games, any action shots, or more importantly personal interviews. The campus also has intramural sports, Student Union functions, committee meetings and general U.P.E.I. information that the students never hear anything about unless of course it is negative. We have a beautiful Field House that the newspaper could have a fitness page with different nutrition and exercise tips every week, but no, we have to read about Superman or Twentysomething instead of reading about the most important people on campus...all of us!

I see little effort on your part to make this paper more personal for the students. I understand about having articles to interest all people, freedom of press, etc. but it sure would be nice to see a weekly review about our hockey team, basketball teams or campus life in general instead of a NHL review with the last two paragraphs lost in the end referring to the Panthers. The article said, "It really is too bad that not very many U.P.E.I. students attend the Panther games...lack of support is always a factor contributing to a team's success or failure..." Maybe your news team would like to take this into consideration when bringing together your next paper. Think about it.

Sincerely,  
Treena Gallant